The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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All Contributions for the August Number should be forwarded to Mr. EUSTACE GORDON, 35 Rosemary Street, not later than July 16th.

Murder and the Moral Law.

These pages will appear at a time when the minds of all right thinking people are profoundly stirred by the tragedy of recent events. Several families, among them members of our own community, have suffered terrible losses at the hands of assassins. There is no conceivable excuse for crimes so calculated and so unspeakably callous as those which occurred near Newry. Innocent and inoffensive people were brutually shot, deliberately and in cold blood, in the presence of their nearest kinsfolk. Our common humanity is outraged by the thought that those responsible were, to outward seeming, men.

And then, before the shock of aroused moral feeling could pass, came the news that Sir Henry Wilson had fallen victim to the like diabolical arts of cruelty and cowardice. The fact that he was one of the most-outstanding and distinguished figures in the Empire does not place his murder in a different category. His death and the deaths of Newry are on the same plane of moral turpitude. They not only affront the noblest instincts of our nature, but they also strike a blow at the principle which Christ made fundamental, viz., the sanctity in the sight of God of every human soul.

The terrible death of the distinguished soldier will naturally receive wider notice and call forth more universal regret. But we keep near to moral fact, and to the actual mind of the illustrious dead, when we regard with the same profound moral indignation the crimes of Newry and of London. That instinct which made great men like Sir Henry Wilson do homage at the grave of an unknown warrior, thereby honouring a common heroism and the representative of a common cause, will surely reassert itself in these later days. The moral foundations of our common civilisation have already collapsed if crimes abhorrent to conscience and alien to sanity and social security can thus occur. The lives of all law-abiding persons must not only be deemed precious, but also be made secure. Murder by whomsoever committed must be visited with promptitude and with all the powers of outraged justice. Until this be done the pillars of society are rotten and the art of government a miserable farce.

It is not a question of politics but of something far more important. God and moral principles are no respectors of persons or politics. Just as we believe human brotherhood to be a universal fact, so likewise we regard moral obedience as a universal law. We therefore respond to the promptings and implications of both when we regard with like poignant feelings the terrible outrages of Newry and of London, and let our profoundest sympathy extend alike to the mourners in both centres.

Notes of the Month.

At the General Synod Meeting last month this Magazine was again recognized as the official organ of the Church. Its present Editor was re-appointed to that position, with the continued co-operation of the Rev. G. J. Slipper as Business Agent. Speaking for both the re-appointed officials may we say that we regard the action of the General Synod as a mark of confidence and a measure of encouragement. We hope to justify that confidence to the satisfaction of our subscribers and readers. The more of both we secure the more we shall recognise therein one indication of success. We are of opinion that our community needs an organ of its collective activities and a representative of its free and unfettered spirit. Once again, therefore, we earnestly appeal for the support of our congregations and their members. Local correspondents render valuable help by timely and terse contributions. Local treasurers save the time and patience of the Business Agent when they discharge their financial obligations promptly.

* *

A suggestion was made at the Meeting in June that chapters from the history of our church might serve a useful purpose as part of our monthly contents. We welcome such suggestions since we wish to give our readers what they need and what they desire. In the immediate future the Editor will be on holiday, hence the temporary change in the directions to contributors appearing on the first page of this issue. Mr. Eustace Gordon has kindly consented to fill the Editorial position while the Editor is away. But when the latter and his readers settle down again to normal duties he hopes to act upon the above-mentioned suggestion. Let it be remembered that he is always grateful to any persons who acquaint him with their views on matters of interest to our readers generally.

The election of the Rev. Eustace Thompson as Moderator was a recognition of conscientious service rendered to our cause. Mr. Thompson, although by birth and education English, has been many years in this country, and first at the Stanhope Street Domestic Mission and since at Cairncastle has laboured diligently and well. To some persons Cairncastle seems far away; to Mr. Thompson on his bicycle, it has become a mere suburb of Belfast. No one attends meetings far and near with greater regularity. At the same time he does duty to his work and also achieves literary distinction as well. His Lesson Notes are a feature of our monthly issues and for many years he has contributed to our pages. We, therefore, join with his friends elsewhere in wishing him a happy and successful year's office.

* *

In his closing address as Moderator the Rev. Alex. Gordon gave expression to an opinion we have expressed elsewhere, viz., that a new grouping of our congregations is very desirable. Both expense and valuable time are now sacrificed by the present arrangement of our three presbyteries. Thus, we call one the Presbytery of Antrim, and yet include under that heading County Down congregations as far away as Clough and Downpatrick. Three of our Belfast congregations belong with a certain fitness to the above-named Presbytery, but the fourth Belfast congregation, Mountpottinger, is included in the Presbytery of Bangor! For the latter name there was once some probable justification, but now neither reason nor geography lends it the least support. We hope Mr. Gordon's reminder of our anomalous and amorphous mode of being will not be forgotten, but lead to some more sensible and convenient classification.

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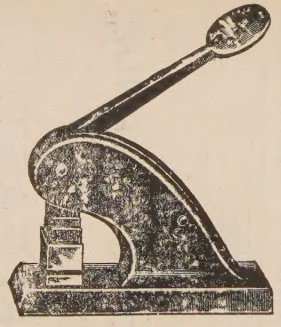

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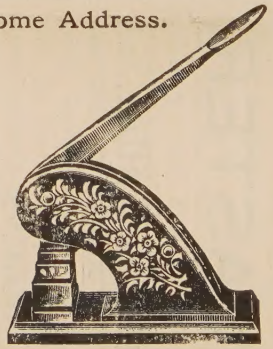

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Young People's Page.

A Great Poet and Patriot.

This month thousands of persons will be thinking of the life and work of a famous English writer, Percy Bysshe Shelley. It was on July 8th, 1822, that his short life of less than thirty years came to an end in tragedy, for upon that date, now to be widely celebrated a century later, he was drowned off the coast of Italy. We feel sure we can rely on the sympathy of our readers for this great writer when we remind them that amongst the most beautiful pieces of poetry brought to their early notice at school or in later life were some by Shelley. The titles of poems like the "Ode to the West Wind," and "To a Skylark" will recall past pleasure. Even a young child can enter into the meaning and catch the music of his shorter and simpler verses. Let us give one short example as it appears in "The Children's Garland from the best Poets":—

"A widow bird sate mourning for her love
Upon a wintry bough;
The frozen wind crept on above,
The freezing stream below.
There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
No flower upon the ground,
And little motion in the air
Except the mill-wheel's sound."

To read such a poem aloud is to understand how it is that Shelley is regarded as one of the most musical poets in our language. Living at a period of great literary activity, and having for his contemporaries some of the most famous writers of modern times, he was second to none in his ability to unite felicity of diction to pure thought and passionate feeling. Thus, one close student of his writings arrives at this conclusion concerning Shelley: "He was the loftiest and the most spontaneous singer of our language. Not only did he write the best lyrics, but the best tragedy, the best translations, and the best familiar poems of his century."

That is surely very high praise, and it is no wonder that many persons will seek to do honour to the memory of one deserving so great a tribute. We would ask our readers not merely to accept the latter but to test its truth by taking up their Shelley once again. Let them begin with the first praised part of his poetry, his lyrics, either such examples as we have already mentioned, or the very beautiful specimens to be found included in longer works like "Prometheus Unbound." For sheer spontaneity and sustained musical effect not even Shakespeare has surpassed them. We dare not attempt to illustrate our thesis, so many are the examples we would like to give.

But it must be remembered that Shelley was something more than a great poet. He was almost equally eminent for the beauty of his prose writings. The letters which he wrote home from his places of sojourn in Italy to friends in his native England are amongst the best literary letters we possess. He had a passionate love of nature and an exquisite power of observing and describing her beauties. And as recently published prose works of his have increasingly shown he was a thinker of no mean importance, concerned with the great issues of life and morality.

Yet it is as a patriot that we would like finally to think and speak of him. His patriotism was no conventional thing—the utterance of popular sentiment or the support of popular prejudice. Just as in religion he dared to criticise conventional Christianity and was denounced as atheist, a reproach he did not really deserve, so likewise he ventured to stand opposed to some of the strongest tendencies of his time. Yet no one can venture to doubt his great love of his country, his unconquerable conviction of the greatness which is destined to be hers if she will courageously seek to achieve it. When, in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, many persons were in that mood of depression which is equally evident now, he not only refused to be downhearted, but endeavoured to rouse them to action. He issued an appeal and a challenge which touched many hearts in his day and still awaken a response in ours.

Temperance Notes.

BEFORE THE SYNOD.

In their report presented to Synod at the Annual Meeting on Wednesday, 21st June, it was stated that there was "an apparent apathy of the Churches in Temperance Work." This meant, of course, so far as that Committee were concerned. We have no doubt that many, the majority, of our Churches do a great deal of work in the Temperance Cause. Many have quite healthy Bands of Hope, there are Temperance Societies for the older members, and references are constantly being made from the pulpits on the evils of alcohol and the blessings of abstention from its use. The next sentence in the report suggests what is meant, "No requests were made for special addresses on Temperance, and consequently no visits were paid." It meant that there was no co-ordination in Temperance Work. We have our Committee composed of staunch advocates of the Cause, but use is not made of it. When the ministers and laity meet in conclave annually and feel in assembly their solidarity as a Church why do they not on returning home make use of the organizations at Synod appointed? In some cases they do not even financially support them.

On the first two occasions of the appearance of these Notes a request was made that the Local Secretaries of Bands of Hope and Temperance Societies generally, send a report of their labours to us; the thought being expressed that we might mutually benefit by an exchange of views through the columns of this Magazine. Here could be told our successes and our difficulties. There was no response whatever! It is really very hard to labour for what is undoubtedly a **common** cause amid such apathy. Not only are our forces against the powerful enemy weakened by such dissipation of energy, but by individual effort alone, we lose the obvious advantages of mutual confidence and combined labours. The N.U.T.A. have issued a circular letter calling upon the Churches to help in a forward movement, and suggesting various ways in which that organization may aid them in their individual efforts. If the Churches over here respond, it will be so much to the good, but why do they ignore their own Committee, i.e., the Committee appointed by themselves at the June Meeting of 1921?

The following resolution was unanimously agreed to by Synod this year:—"That we, the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland in General Synod assembled, desire to express our earnest conviction that Temperance Reform is urgently required, and that the democracy of to-day are prepared for immediate legislation on this subject. Believing that the people themselves should be in a position to voice their opinions, we pledge ourselves to support any just measure of Local Option that the Northern Government may bring forward."

P. G.

Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland.

GENERAL SYNOD GATHERINGS.

Once again we have met in Annual Assembly and some attempt must be made to record the events and register their impressions. Doubtless owing to the disturbed conditions, the attendances were not large. Such also was the recent experience of the General Assembly. Yet the tone and temper of the proceedings were helpful and should be stimulative for future work. No Garden Party was possible on this occasion but we hope that this popular feature of our proceedings may reappear with the better times for which we hope and pray.

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As is customary, the Annual Service provided the opening event, and it, like the subsequent gatherings, with the exception of the tea provided by the Unity Guild and served in the Central Hall, occurred in the First Church, Rosemary Street. The congregation might easily have been larger on June 20th, and it was unfortunate that it was not so, because of the impressive character given to the service by our honoured friend, the Rev. Alex. Gordon, M.A., who as Moderator re-appeared in his old pulpit. The Scripture Readings and Prayers were all that they should be on such an occasion. The Sermon, based on the text, "And ye shall eat old store long kept, and ye shall bring forth the old because of the new" (Leviticus xxvi. 10) was a most informing survey of the process of history whereby our modern privileges were attained. Dealing with the characteristics of Calvinism, the preacher emphasised its certainties, leading to confident and courageous action in life, and its fundamental tenet, the sovereignty of God. Calvin's anticipation of free critical inquiry into the character of the biblical books, as revealed in his commentaries, was pointed out, and Martin Luther's views concerning the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the character of the Epistle of James were recalled. Thus, it was demonstrated that bibliolatry was not a characteristic of the early Reformers but first became manifest in the works of their successors. By such significant glance at past history we were taught the lesson how from the past rightly regarded was made possible the new from which it sprang and in which it was rooted. The bearing of this upon the history of our churches, nurtured in Calvinism, growing to maturity in free and fearless quest of truth, was brought to our minds. We found ourselves not at a final goal but at a new turn of the road, with opening vistas to fuller truth and finer endeavour. It was a timely utterance that instructed the mind and at the same time stimulated the will.

Wednesday, June 21st, represented a complete day's programme, beginning with the Communion Service at 10-30, and ending with the Annual Lecture at 7-30. The retiring Moderator was responsible for the service of Communion which always seems the most fitting prelude to our deliberations. Then, in full consciousness of our unity with each other and with all who are in Christ, we commemorate the age-honoured rite of the Lord's Supper. Certainly, we who were present at this last celebration could not miss the meaning and the value of what we did in remembrance of Christ, of the body which was broken for us, of the blood which symbolized his supreme self-sacrifice.

Soon after eleven o'clock the Rev. Alex. Gordon opened the proceedings and the business of the General Synod commenced. The first thing of importance was the election of a successor in the position of Moderator and this fell to the Rev. Eustace Thompson, who received nomination from two of the three presbyteries. He accordingly assumed the privileges and responsibilities of office and presided over the remaining deliberations. The re-election of the Clerk (Rev. G. J. Slipper) and of the Treasurer (Rev. J. A. Kelly) was clearly the will of the assembly and implied appreciation of work well done. Much of the business later transacted was routine, but there were one or two important exceptions. One was the despatch of a telegram of congratulation to the King and Queen on the safe return of the Prince of Wales from his long and eventful journey.

Another interesting item was the presentation of, and the discussion upon, a report of the Special Committee appointed at the last Annual Meeting of the General Synod to make inquiry into the sale of the Meeting-Houses of Carrickfergus and Newtownards. Owing to the somewhat heated character of the discussion about the latter, one aspect was perhaps entirely overlooked. The Committee gave very much time and thought to the matters which are of

vital interest to the whole Church. Whatever might be the differences of opinion concerning the inclusion or exclusion of certain sentences in the report, there can be only one conclusion as to the value of the work done and the interest thereby stimulated. The Church owes a real debt of gratitude to the members of the Special Committee for the services so willingly rendered in their critical and eminently useful enterprise.

Another matter to which reference should be made, since it also appeared for the first time as a part of the annual business, was the confirmation of the adoption of this Magazine as the official organ of the Church and the appointment of its present editor as the representative official of the General Synod. We can only say that we are deeply sensible of the honour and will do our best to fulfil the duties of the office.

The Annual Dinner is always a pleasant social function, and this year's was no exception. Served in the Shaftesbury Restaurant, Donegall Place, it was satisfactory from the gastronomic point of view and pleasing, if not hilarious, from the social. The stories without which no after-day toast or speech would be deemed rightly composed were present and were mirth-provoking. Fitting seriousness was accorded the loyal toast of "The King," submitted by the newly-installed Moderator (the Rev. Eustace Thompson), while the sentiment of "The Northern Parliament and its Prosperity" received adequate treatment from the ex-Moderator (the Rev. Alex. Gordon). Altogether, the dinner was very successful and those who partook thereof found themselves prepared to do justice to the admirable mental feast richly provided at the Annual Lecture on "Anglican Modernism To-Day."

In our June issue we anticipated the coming of the Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A., and provided our readers with an excellent portrait. Below, we attempt a report of the salient points of his Lecture, while contenting ourselves here with a brief characterisation of its general nature and the mode of its delivery. It was obvious to all conveniently placed for seeing that the Lecturer drew on very full and rich materials, representing a very close study of his subject. So ample were his resources of citation and comment that he had to leave out more than he retained. Yet this was done so skilfully that it involved no break in the argument or any hesitation in the delivery. The points were pertinent, logically deduced and connected, clearly and convincingly made. If any auditors were formerly guilty of the belief that Scotsmen have no humour, Mr. Cross, no unworthy representative of the body, gave such belief its deserved quietus. Throughout his Lecture some humorous comment or comparison was at hand to enforce his thesis or illustrate his particular point. Thus, while our report may indicate some of his lines of thought they cannot reproduce the impression received from the actual personality of the Lecturer. Mr. Cross fully justified his selection as the last and not least of those who have rendered valuable service to us as our Annual Lecturer. We hope that even our imperfect reproduction of some parts of a full hour's Lecture will make real our obligation to Mr. Cross, while some of his hearers will, we hope, be induced in the light of it to re-read the Cambridge papers of last year.

BAPTISM.

LEWIS—William Robert, son of Wm. Robert M'Connell Lewis and Winnie Agnes (Brown), born at 4 Alaska Street, Belfast, May 11th, and baptized in York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, on May 28th, 1922, by Rev, Alex. O. Ashworth.

FLETCHER.—On June 18th, in York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Belfast, by the Rev. Alexander O. Ashworth, Emma M'Candless, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Fletcher, 19 Westland Street, Belfast.

Robert Campbell Memorial Window.

A beautiful stained glass window, of which the above is a representation, was dedicated on June 25th to the memory of the late Robert Campbell, F.R.C.S. (England). The window was the gift of the widow, while a reading desk and lectern were presented by the members of her family. These generous gifts will greatly enhance the beauty of the church and also form a most helpful part of its accessories for divine worship. The window, the work of Messrs. Ward Partners, of Belfast, represented in the one light "Jesus Healing the Sick," and in the other "Receiving and Blessing Little Children." The respective crests of the Campbell and M'Taggart families appear below the two lights, while above is a beautiful Celtic cross. The whole window made a most favourable impression on the large congregation, most of the members of which saw it for the first time at the Dedication Service. The latter was conducted by the minister, the Rev. Alfred Turner, while the Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., offered the introductory

Prayer and Dedication Prayer, and also read the First Lesson in the absence of the Rev. E. I. Fripp, B.A., whose evening engagement at Ballycarry made it impossible for him to be present. The members of the Campbell families were present, also many of the professional brethren of Dr. Campbell, together with parties from the neighbouring churches and from Belfast. Mrs. James Moore sang with great taste and feeling "If with all your hearts" (Mendelssohn), and "Abide with me" (Bohm-Dana). Miss Getty presided at the organ. The whole service was appropriate and impressive. Portions of Mr. Turner's Address we give below, but since lack of space will not permit of its complete inclusion we can merely indicate the character of the parts of the Address omitted.

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"In dedicating this beautiful Memorial Window to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Robert Campbell, we have testified to the desire that is in us to bring our choicest gifts into the House of God, and to hold in affectionate remembrance the memory of one who was beloved by all who knew him, and held in deepest thankful regard by many who did not know him but who have felt the blessing of his once kind thought and great skill. It is in every way fitting that this memorial, coming out of a great sorrow and out of a great love, should stand where it does. He was born in this parish, as a boy he worshipped in this church, and there are still some few among us who remember him in his boyhood's days. Not only did he not forget these scenes of his early life but with the passing years his love for them strengthened, so that when coming here it was like coming home; and all too soon, as it seems to us poor mortals, he came finally and found the last resting-place for his remains in the near-by graveyard with those of his forefathers. The name he bore is written large in the stirring records of these parts, and we may be quite certain that his contribution to the honour of the name was not less than that of any of his predecessors. Outside, in the great world, among the cleverest men of his profession, he won recognition of his undoubted ability; but more than that, and of greater significance, he won their love. For he was altogether and entirely lovable; children loved him; and great, strong, intellectual, skilled men acknowledged his remarkable charm of personality, and gave to him an unstinted measure of their affection."

Mr. Turner then gave a careful and interesting account of the connection of the Campbell family with Templepatrick and the district, He referred to Hugh Campbell in the 17th century, Robert Campbell in the 18th century, minister of the Templepatrick Church, and also the later Robert Campbell, who was a successor in its pulpit in the 19th century. Of the latter, the third Robert Campbell was son, and by his personality and brilliant gifts proved a worthy successor. Stories were told illustrative of his character and his love of his native district, and it was shown how, after his family removed to Belfast in 1882, he distinguished himself at school, university, and, above all, in the great work of ministering to sick and suffering humanity. His reputation in the North of Ireland as a brilliant surgeon was second to none, and the number indebted to his skill and sympathy could hardly be overestimated. They, at least, would hold him in honour and grateful recollection.

The concluding part of the Address dealt with the subjects of the window and their significance. Here we give Mr. Turner's own words:—

"Here in this Church where his father ministered we seek to perpetuate his memory. This beautiful window raised out of remembrance of loving companionship in life, as also out of sorrowful loss, by Mrs. Campbell; and these gifts, lectern and reading-desk, presented as memorials by members of her family, will speak their message to this generation, and to subsequent generations of worshippers here. The message, we may believe, will be a permanent one. Our Lord is

represented as receiving sick persons that He might heal them. It is an aspect of His ministry well worth remembering. The most vivid accounts of His Work present Him as preaching about the Kingdom of God and healing the sick. Behind His life, His speech, His work, there is always a background of theology. On no occasion does He appear to get away from thought of God. And the substance of the theology may be found in the Lord's Prayer:—'Our Father which art in Heaven.' When He preached the Kingdom of God, He preached that men might realise the Kingdom in their midst; 'Thy Kingdom come' meant that it might come upon the earth, and 'Thy will be done upon earth even as it is done in heaven.' The betterment of this life would appear to have been His ideal, the realization of a healthy, wholesome soul in a healthy, wholesome body. As He would lead men to God so also would He heal their bodily infirmities. Health was the great desideratum. I cannot speak of New Testament diseases nor of their then methods of treatment for I have no qualification to warrant me in so doing, but it does seem to me that He Who could project and stamp His marvellous personality upon the ages, and set up, for Western peoples at least, the incomparable ideal of Christian civilization would have knowledge also of the healing art so that when they brought unto Him the sick He healed them. The memorial will teach us that our Lord was interested in physical health.

"Turning to the other light we find Him in the act of blessing—blessing the children. And here, properly understood, we are upon a plane equal in importance with that of healing. This blessing may touch the mind and soul. So much depends upon a proper blessing of the children! And how easy, alas! it is to curse them; to bring them up in questionable environment, to teach them to accept the wrong, to instil into them the terrible principle of hatred. And this has been done before now according to arrangement! When done it is an unchristian act. Our Lord blesses the children. He expects us to bring them up in clean surroundings, to teach them the right and how to accept it, to instil into their minds the great principle of love, love for God, and love for their fellow-creatures. This is to bless the children, and the memorial will keep that thought in our minds.

"And, lastly, we have the beautifully carved and designed Celtic representation of the great Christian symbol—the Cross. The principle of the Cross came in let us say with the first set of fundamental principles and is coeval with the human race. That principle has been woven from the very beginning by the 'Loom of Time' into the fabric of human life and so far as we know will thread its way in and out to the end. Once, approximately two thousand years ago, the weaving process paused for a space, and the principle assumed the material form of a Cross which men could see and touch. That Cross was raised on Calvary, and though associated with the world's saddest tragedy, has come to stand for us as the symbol of duty done, of faithfulness unto death, of allegiance to what is right and good and true, of the love of God for man, and as containing the secret of everlasting life. Amen."

Lesson Notes.

2nd July. OLD TESTAMENT PARABLES. II.—The Poor Man's Lamb. II. Sam. xii. 1-7a. Key Text II. Sam. xii. 7a.

(II. Sam. xii. 1-7a) (v. 6) David is made to say "four-fold" in accordance with the law of theft as set forth in Ex. xxii. 1.—"If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it or sell it; he shall pay five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." (7a) Nathan, unsuspected by David, has been holding up a mirror in which the latter does not recognise his own reflection. The ewe lamb in the parable represents the wife of Uriah the Hittite. David

had been not merely wicked enough to take her for a wife of his own, but had caused Uriah himself to be placed in the forefront of the hottest battle and abandoned by his comrades so as to be slain by the enemy. The rich man's flock and herd represents the several wives of David, whom, like most oriental monarchs, he possessed at one and the same time.

It is much easier to see other people's faults than to see one's own. (Cp. Aesop's fable of the two wallets that every man carries—one in front, full of the faults of others, the other behind, full of his own which he does not see and does not take out to look at). That is not an excuse for the faults which we ourselves commit. On the contrary, it shews how easy it is for us to do things which, if we gave them enough thought, or viewed them in the proper light, in which others view them, would appear even to ourselves grave offences. When we look at others and see their faults, we should ask ourselves, are we too guilty of any such things as we see to be abhorrent in them. Likewise with virtues. St. Francis of Assissi has been called the Mirror of Perfection. That is a title due rather to the Master of Francis, namely Christ, who is like the living Word of God—to be a lamp unto our feet (Ps. cxix. 105) to shew us the way, the truth and the life (Jn. xiv. 6). "For if any man is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." (Jas. i. 23, 24.)

9*th July*. *OLD TESTAMENT PARABLES. III.—The Two Brothers.* II. Sam. xiv. 1-23. Key Text, II. Sam. xiv. 14a.

(II. Sam. xiv. 1-23). Joab was captain of the host of David. Zeruiah was a sister of David's. Absalom, a son of David's, had caused his stepbrother to be assassinated for having wronged Absalom's sister. (2) Tekoa was about 12 miles south of Jerusalem. (7) It was, according to tribal custom, the duty of the family to avenge the murdered brother. The woman strikes pity in the hearer by likening herself to a poor widow (impoverished by the loss of one son) whose only comfort is the warmth of a meagre fire upon the hearth (represented by the other son whose life is being compassed). A man's name was kept alive in the memory of survivors by being mentioned as that of the father of his son still living among them. (13) The meaning is, that David having banished Absalom on pain of death for having murdered his brother, is inculcating the doctrine of vengeance which the kindred of the woman's son are acting upon. (14a) That is to say, Absalom may die through one of the multitude of possible causes; then David will be sorry for not having relented and restored him before it was too late. (14b) Probably needs emendation so as to be paraphrased thus:—"God will not punish David with death for arranging for the restoration of Absalom, so that, returned from banishment he may participate in the worship of God at Jerusalem and not remain an outcast therefrom." (15) "Afraid" because the king's treatment of his own sons has hitherto kept in countenance the zeal for vengeance of those others against her remaining son. The woman's story is a parable only inasmuch as it includes, as in the case of David's sons, the case of one brother murdering another. Being not a true story, but a made one, it is intended to bring home the harm that not *has been*, but *may be*, done by the king's example of a spirit of vengeance.

16*th July*. *OLD TESTAMENT PARABLES. IV.—The Cedar and the Thistle.* II. Kings xiv. 8-16). Key Text, II. Kings xiv. 9b.

(II. Kings xiv. 8-16). For the kingdoms of Israel and Judah see February 5th, 1st par. There was a period during which Israel held a suzerainty over Judah. Jehoash himself seems to have restored that state of things which had come to an end with the

dynasty of Omri. Edom had been conquered by David, but had revolted in the reign of Jehoram, fifth king of Judah after Solomon. Amaziah, ninth sovereign of Judah after Solomon, attempted to reconquer the Edomites but although he gained a victory over them (v. 7) he did not succeed in his whole subject. His partial success against Edom led him to think of attempting to throw off the yoke that had been placed upon his own kingdom by Jehoash king of Israel. (v. 8b) " Come, let us look one another in the face *in battle*." (9) The cedars of Lebanon were famed for their magnificent size. For a similar contrast to that between the insignificant " thistle " or thorn, with the splendid cedar, see 25th June (v. 15). The thistle and the cedar are intended of course to stand for Amaziah and Jehoash respectively ; or rather, the insignificance of the thistle for the impotence of Amaziah, and the grandeur of the cedar for the power of Jehoash. (11) Beth-shemesh was about 15 miles west of Jerusalem. (12-14) Amaziah was neither slain nor kept permanently a prisoner. After spoiling the temple and the royal places, the king of Israel was satisfied by taking hostages as a pledge of continued submission According to II. Chr. xxv., 20, the defeat of Amaziah at Beth-shemesh was his punishment for setting up the gods of the Edomites (xxv. 14) to be his own gods for having helped him (as he supposed) in his victory over the Edomites. Samaria was the royal city of Israel, as Jerusalem was that of Judah.

23rd July. OLD TESTAMENT PARABLES. V.—The Vineyard. Is. v. 1-7. Key Text, Is. v. 4b.

The singer of the song is the prophet Isaiah. His friend (his " beloved ") is God. His vineyard is the land of Israel ; the vine, the men of Judah who inhabit it. The tower in the vineyard is partly for a watch tower, but partly perhaps for a dwelling place or a lodge for a worker or for the owner. The wine press was hewn out of the rock in expectation of the abundant yield from the vines. (We met with a winepress before—March 5th). In v. 3 the minstrel (Isaiah) makes the owner himself (his well beloved) address the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Judah. The " command " in v. 6 is not the command of God, but the curse of man. Cp. II. Sam. i. 21 in which David pronounces a similar curse upon the mountains of Gilboa. The judgment passed upon the vineyard for its worthlessness corresponds with that passed by David upon the rich man in the parable of Nathan v. 5, 6—July 2nd. The interpretation in which the people to whom the parable is addressed are the ones thus impressively condemned, is reserved for the very end (v. 7) just as in that other parable—" *Ye* are the vine (*Thou* art the man).

In the Synoptic Gospels (Mt. xxi. 33-41—Mk. xii. 1-9—Lk. xx. 9-16) there is also a parable of a vineyard of which God is the owner. (Mt. xxi. 33—Mk. xii. 1) is doubtless modelled partly upon Is. v. 2). But in that parable it is the labourers in the vineyard, not the vine itself, which stand for the men of Jerusalem and the Jew in general. In Jn. xv. 1-8 we have the simile of the True Vine, which rather than the synoptic parable, though less in form than in idea, resembles the parable in Isaiah ; for in it too the fruit is the point of central importance, denoting qualities of character as shewn in the goodness of the manner of life. In the Isaiah parable the grapes expected were justice and righteousness, the wild grapes that came forth instead were the oppression of the poorer people by the rich and the cry which they raised in complaint. The two special faults (wild grapes) of which Isaiah accuses the influential people among his compatriots are land-greed and intemperance with their attendant evil consequences (See rest of Isaiah v.).

30th July. OLD TESTAMENT PARABLES. VI.—Plowing and Threshing. Is. xxviii. 23-29. Key Text, Is. xxviii. 29b. (" wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom ").

The lesson of the parable is summed up in the words of the Key Text. God who has taught men to be methodical in their way of working may be taken to be methodical in His own. He does not do anything for the sake of doing it, but with the excellent reason of an expectation of a particular and good result. The plowman does not go on turning over the soil indefinitely for the sake of doing that and nothing else, he does it with a view to the subsequent sowing of the seed. In like manner, if God performs operations of a violent character in His dealings with men, it is not for the sake of any pleasure in ill-treating them for no purpose, it is for the sake of bringing good out of them in the end. Isaiah has predicted the chastisement of his countrymen (the people of Jerusalem and Judah) by the armies of Assyria. That is not for the sake of giving free course to the exercise of the power of the Assyrians without regard to the consequence to the people of Judah. When the farmer has plowed and otherwise prepared the ground, and sowed his seed and gathered his sundry kinds of crops, again he shews his discernment in suitable treatment of each in the process of threshing. The tender grains are beaten out with rods ; heavy instruments, such as the cart-wheel are reserved for those that can bear it ; but even that is not driven to and fro till the grain becomes ground to powder (the obscurity of v. 28 needs to be cleared up as it is in R.V. margin). So God will not allow the Assyrians to utterly destroy his people of Judah. Good shall be brought forth for them, not unlimited disaster as the result of their chastisement at the hands of that potent enemy.

The Annual Lecture.

"ANGLICAN MODERNISM TO-DAY."

Prefacing his Lecture with a reference to his Scottish Presbyterian upbringing and his present regard for Presbyterian order and dignity, Mr. Cross speedily placed himself *en rapport* with his hearers. His first endeavour was to state the philosophical basis of Modernism, not alone of the Anglican variety, but of other representative forms. This was the Idealism which derived from Plato, but of which no finer definition was procurable than that of St. Paul :— "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." According to the idealistic philosophy the world of the senses was the world of appearance, not that of reality. The latter claimed its own in the world of eternal ideas, phenomenal things being but their imperfect and transient expression. Yet when we think of terms like Natural and Supernatural, Finite and Infinite, Temporal and Eternal, we must not think of things antagonistic or contradictory. They are complementary terms. Like Carlyle we can think of Natural Supernaturalism, and Nature be for us "the Time-vesture of God." The Finite is but the extension to its realisation in the Infinite.

Such, then, being the philosophical point of view of the Modernist, it determines his conception of the Trinity, his thought of God, his attitude towards miracles, his presentation of Christ's person and work. Each of these came in for illuminating treatment and illustration at the hands of the Lecturer, although the Christological aspects received the greater attention, as befitted its important place in the famous Girton College Conference.

Mr. Cross showed, and to most of his readers his reasoning was conclusive, that the Modernist conclusions, despite their explanations, could not be differentiated from the oft-derided Unitarian views. Thus, in the matter of the Trinity, Modernists found something heretical and contrary to primitive Christian thought in the tritheism popularly accepted as orthodox Trinitarianism. Hence, Tertullian's three persons, so confusing in later theological speculation, were distinctly repudiated by men like Dr. Hastings

Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle, and Professor Bethune-Baker, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity. Quoting from the first writer's "Philosophy and Religion," the Lecturer left us in no doubt as to his trenchant treatment of the Athanasian Creed and its highly technical definition of the Trinity. Hence, while Modernists continued still to use the term, it represented no common stock of conceptions possessed by the Modernist and the Traditionalist. What the former believes in is the Uni-personality of God, not a God in three Persons, but One Person in three functions, one individual in three forms of action. But to hold such modern views and at the same time recite ancient creeds is not merely to be guilty of early Christian heresy like Sabellius, it is perilously akin to fraudent trading in the commerce of ideas. "The Modernists are in a difficult position, they desire to be mediators between old and new, they are practically compelled, while remaining loyal members of the Church, to run their old wares under the established trade-marks, that is the pity of it; but how long the general credit of religion will sustain a market for itself on such policy is no frivolous query."

How this Modernist view of the Trinity is bound up with its thought of Jesus was shown by quotation from Dr. Rashdall's paper on "Christ as Logos and Son of God" (Cambridge Conference Number of "The Modern Churchman.") There, Jesus is presented as a wholly human being, united to the Logos, though this conjunction was not confined to him even by the early Fathers. Dr. Rashdall's conclusion, forced upon him by his examination of Christian doctrine is "that nothing is left of that older conception of Christ as a distinct, a 'second' and inferior God which is found in Justin and the earlier fathers. The Son is the Wisdom of God, as the Father is His Power and the Holy Ghost His Love, and the three constitute 'One Mind'." Such conclusion is so radically different from the traditional Trinitarianism as to justify Professor Pringle-Pattison's designation of popular Christianity as in the main a doctrine of three Gods, and Professor Bethune-Baker's contemptuous dismissal of the 'social' conception of God.

Again, Modernism finds no place for the conception of Christ's pre-existence as ordinarily held. Even those who in recent times defend the theory of 'personal pre-existence' on ethical grounds rather than metaphysical awaken little sympathy in the mind of the modern philosopher, Professor Bethune-Baker. Thus, "it must be observed that for scientific theology the pre-existence of the Son is not really 'personal' in the sense in which popular religion understands the term. By faith in God to-day we mean the conviction that Power and Love and Purpose are the characteristics of ultimate reality. And the Pauline conception of pre-existence, to which I have referred, may be found to have its true religious and scientific value for us as the expression of the conviction that the personality and life of Jesus was the crowning manifestation of this divine power and love and purpose." No wonder that Mr. Cross draws the right logical conclusion from this pronouncement of the Cambridge Professor: "It seems plain that the personal pre-existence of Christ is given up; God is conceived eternally under the category of Subject and Object; this object being the World however constituted, into which He pours more and more of Himself, and reaching its maximum historically in the man Jesus."

Coming more closely to the Modernist Christology about which the conflict is certain to be fiercest, Mr. Cross was especially interesting and suggestive. First and foremost is the critical question as to what real and available knowledge we have of Christ. Here the Modernist is no believer in an infallible record. He adopts the critical attitude, although he leans to the conservative side. Thus, some Modernists are far from agreeing with the

radical conclusions of Drs. Lake and Foakes Jackson. Yet the Headmaster of Sherborne is not only speaking for himself but expressing the views of others when he says, "That the Jesus of popular religion is largely a mythological figure I cannot doubt." But while admitting the possibility of the mythical and the unhistorical in the Synoptic Gospels the Modernist conclusion is that we do know from them the broad outlines of Christ's teaching and the main features of his human personality, nor can doubt the inspiring greatness of both. Jesus Christ remains for the Modernists the central figure in this earth's history. Nevertheless, as Mr. Cross pointed out, their treatment of the sources of our knowledge of Jesus, "while meant to do justice to His unique greatness and influence, does seem to take away all objective ground for the dogma of His sinlessness." The Christological position of the Modernists was then shown by a quotation from Canon Tollinton's article, "Jesus as the Revealer of God." What are we to understand by the terms "Messiah," "Son of God," "Son of Man?" Obviously nothing which differentiates Jesus in kind from man as the Modernist regards the latter. Mr. Cross is only making the logical deduction from the Modernist writings when he declares: "This insistence on the complete natural and normal humanity of Jesus is the cardinal and characteristic theory in the Modernist Christology."

But the belief in Christ's true humanity does not exclude divinity. Yet all men are divine in their degree, but by the divinity of Christ particularly is meant "that we are justified in thinking of God as like Christ, that the character and teaching of Christ contains the fullest disclosure both of the character of God Himself, and of His will for men." In this matter Anglican Modernism is akin to Roman Catholic Modernism as expressed by Baron von Hugel: "Jesus is declared to hold in His human mind and will as much of God, of God pure, as human nature at its best can be made by God to hold, while remaining human nature still. And yet this same Jesus (though in this supremely heightened sense the Christ) remains thus also truly Jesus—that is, a human mind and will bound to a human body, to sense stimulation, to history and institutions, to succession, time and space. He can thus be our Master and our Model, our Refuge and our Rest."

The Lecturer then pointed to the significant attitude of Modernism and the services rendered so far as they promote understanding of the fundamental unity underlying terms like "human" and "divine," "natural" and "supernatural." As he made clear, Modernism has at any rate the insight to see that the whole content and validity of the Christian revelation goes by the board, if Christ be not at once both genuinely human and at the same time and in the same respect divine; that is to say, the whole motive and meaning of Christianity depends vitally on the essential oneness or identity of "human" and "divine," "natural" and "supernatural."

But, in veiw of such a position reached, Modernism cannot philosophically claim "that Christ is the final revelation of God, still less is it permissible or right to substitute Him for God or worship Him as God, or to make Him instead of God the permanent, real, and ultimate centre of our religious consciousness. He is the way to the Father; we look through Him to God; nay, we see Him in God and God in Him, as we do to a great extent in Nature and in all other high noble and heroic men and women. What holds of them must hold of Christ, in some measure—

They are but broken lights of Thee
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

MR. J. H. SMITH'S DEPARTURE

A Farewell Meeting.

That Mr. Smith has won the affections of the Mission Congregation during the short time he has been with them, was shown by the large attend-

ance at the Central Hall at the Farewell Party, when there was also a sprinkling of people from the other Belfast Churches. It is not merely our own immediate loss that we regret, though that is hard enough to bear, his leaving the Mission involves a general loss to the ministerial profession, which he has decided to abandon.

Mr. C. J. M'Kisack, who took the Chair after tea, voiced our feelings when he described Mr. Smith's departure from our midst as a calamity. He called upon the Rev. H. J. Rossington to give Mr. Smith, on behalf of the Mission, a tangible token of their affection and respect. In presenting Mr. Smith with a wallet well filled with notes Mr. Rossington said he was sure they would all rather part with the money than part with Mr. Smith; they felt they were losing a true friend whom they could all trust.

In his reply Mr. Smith thanked the Mission for their generosity towards him, not only on that occasion, but throughout his stay in Belfast. He reviewed the work which it had been possible to do in the abnormal conditions prevailing in the City, and hoped that all would be as loyal to his successor as they had been to him.

Proceedings terminated with hymn and benediction. During the evening musical and other items were contributed by Mrs. E. R. Jackson, Miss A. Newman, Rev. M. Watkins, Messrs. J. H. Smith and C. Gordon and Master George Hagan.

The Sunday School Conference.

(Continued from last Month.)

This will help to open their eyes to the beauties of nature.

" Let me see the good and bright,
When they pass before my sight."

as one of the children's hymns says :—

" Around me when I look,
His handiwork I see ;
This world is like a picture book
To teach His name to me."*

If possible, shew them some " common objects " under the microscope, and get them to bring something to examine—the wing of a butterfly for example. Then tell them that the more we are able to magnify and look into God's works, the more beautiful and perfect they are found to be. One year I got some frog's spawn and kept it in water in a large dish, till the little tadpoles turned to frogs and the children watched it week by week, and I feel sure it taught them a lesson and showed them a mystery they will always remember.

Sometimes I read a short poem or story to my class and get the elder ones to write out for the next Sunday what they may remember of it. I have got some excellent exercises in this way—and some sad disappointments too.

Children like a change and any fresh way of gaining their interest should be seized.

The opening service before going into class is very important and if reverently taken part in, should be a great help to the teacher in preparing the minds of the scholars for the lesson. Personally I find the six short services, with responses, which are printed at the end of the New Sunday School Hymn Book and also in Mrs. Farrington's " Hymns for Heart and Voice," very suitable. The scholars like to use their voices and to take their part in these services.

Ten days ago, I was at a Sunday School Teachers' Union meeting, which was attended by representatives of some half dozen denominations including Episcopalians, Orthodox Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and Unitarians. It was quite refreshing to hear a Presbyterian minister say he wished they had a catechism that could be understood by children—the " Shorter Catechism" he contended was not to be understood by adults, to say nothing of being understood by children. It had been said, he added, that a child's religion is a very different thing to an adult's, but he found that the older he grew himself, the more he left theology alone,

*Jane E. Leeson.

and came back to the simple faith of a little child. An Episcopalian clergyman at the same conference expressed the desire that an interdenominational catechism might be prepared.

The Bible should be **the** text book of the Sunday School and everything we can get to illustrate it and make it living, should be used, such as models and photographs and objects. The shortest way to the mind is through the avenue of the eye—"eye gate" as it has been called. How much more quickly we take in an idea embodied in a model or a picture, than the same idea described only in words.

The first thing we must aim at in class is to gain the interest and attention of our scholars. Unless we have these the best prepared lesson will fall on deaf ears. Children love to see visible objects, and the teacher who arrives carrying a mysterious parcel, arouses the curiosity of the class, and creates a feeling of expectation which culminates when the parcel is unwrapped and used to illustrate the lesson which has been given. We want to make the Bible a real living thing to our scholars, written about real living men and women, and we want them to think of the Bible lands as real—not the imaginary fairy land they so often think of in connection with it. I have found it very useful to be able to shew my class models and photographs illustrating the manner of life of Eastern people; for the Bible was written **in** the East, **by** Easterns and **for** Easterns; and it is obvious that a study of the houses, dress, occupations, furniture, religion, and in fact everything connected with the land and the people, must throw a flood of light on many passages of Scripture which the scholars would not be able otherwise to understand. I have models of an eastern house, a peasant's cottage, a hand mill, a roll of the law, an inn, and—most useful of all—Herod's Temple.

Then there is the American method of bringing Palestine to the scholars, it being impossible to bring the scholars to Palestine. Dr. Wm. Forbush has brought out two excellent books—"The Travel Lessons on the Old Testament," and "The Travel Lessons on the Life of Jesus," these being accompanied by boxes of stereoscopic views, the former having 51 "standpoints" in Palestine and Egypt the latter 36 in Palestine. With these lessons he has a special series of marked maps, by means of which one is able to locate the "stand-point": he does not like to call it a photograph, but says, "The hood of the stereoscope isolates the beholder. Undistracted now by his surroundings, or by the presence of others, he sits as if in a dark chamber alone, looking out into a world of life."

But useful as these things are, we must not forget, as Dr. Channing so emphatically says (for again I quote from him), that Jesus and His teaching is to be **the** great study. "Much attention is now given, and properly given, by teachers to what may be called the letter of the Gospels, and to the geography of the country where Christ lived, to the customs to which he refers, to the state of society which surrounded him. This knowledge is of great utility. We should strive to learn the circumstances in which Jesus was placed and lived, as thoroughly as those of our own times. We should study the men among whom He lived, their opinions and passions, their hopes and expectations; the sects who hated and opposed Him; the superstitions which prevailed among the learned and the multitude, and strive to see all these things vividly as if we had lived at the very moment of Christ's ministry.

"But all this knowledge is to be gained, not for its own sake, but as a means of bringing us near to Jesus, of letting us into the secrets of His mind, of revealing to us His spirit and character, and of bringing out the full purpose and import of all that He did and said. The Gospels, life-giving as they are, may be rendered wholly inoperative by the want of life in the instructor. So great is my dread of tame mechanical teaching," says Dr.

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Channing, "that I am sometimes almost tempted to question the utility of Sunday Schools." I wonder have we not all sometimes felt this. And yet given the right atmosphere, how glorious was the work done by Sunday Schools in the past, and that which is being done in them to-day. If we have honestly sown good seed, it will bear fruit in purer deeds, nobler thoughts and a higher life. And remember, the thought of you and your teaching—all the suggestions and ideals of goodness which you have tried to give your scholar, go sub-consciously with him when he goes out into the world and has to fight, alone, a moral battle ; to conquer or be conquered in this terrible character-making, or character-ruining battle, which each boy or girl has to face alone.

" Sow in the morn thy seed,
At eve hold not thy hand ;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed,
Broadcast it o'er the land.
And duly shall appear,
In verdure, beauty, strength,
The tender blade, the stalk, the ear,
And the full corn at length.
Thou canst not toil in vain ;
Cold, heat and moist and dry,
Shall foster and mature the grain
For garners in the sky."*

*Frank Walters.

Church Reports unavoidably held over to next month owing to pressure on our space.

The Business Agent, the Rev. G. J. Slipper, earnestly asks for the early payment of all outstanding accounts for the Magazine. Some of these are now considerably over-due, and it would greatly facilitate the balancing of the accounts if prompt payment were the practice.

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